This then was the situation generally in 1982 when Joan Meggitt and I last engaged in fieldwork in Enga Province. It can fairly be stated that the frequent outbreaks of violence, the bloodshed and the destruction, all intensified by increasing consumption of alcohol, were at that time effectively crippling the material development of the province and embittering the social life of the growing population. Primary production (for instance, of export and of subsistence crops) had declined, as had the implementation and even the quality of much of the health, education and social services that national and provincial officers were charged to provide to the community as a whole. Almost everyone living in the province was suffering as a consequence of the myopic obstinacy of Enga clansmen – women and young people especially, but also the very politicians who all too often had been the active stirrers of this nasty stew. And from what we have learned from the many reports emanating from various sources in Papua New Guinea, including Enga, since 1982 the situation there seems scarcely to have improved.

All of which returns me to the issues raised earlier in this paper. On moral as well as rational ground, where now do our sympathies lie? Do we continue to regard Enga people as hapless or well intentioned victims first of the colonial intrusion and then of an oppressive central government that pushes for national development at the expense of traditional local autonomy and cultural values – not a persuasive argument in the face of the manifest willingness of Enga to join in and to profit materially from the world market system. On the other hand, given the apparent reluctance of so many Enga clans to temper their parochial rapacity or to abandon their self-destructive recourse to violence in their dealings with one another, let alone with outsiders, should we not instead endeavour to understand and to foster that same central government which strives to create and maintain an independent nation-state of Papua New Guineans, in whose benefits all citizens may share equally?

I know which position I would advocate.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Bulmer 1960a, 1960b, 1961.
3. See Bulmer 1962.

REFERENCES


APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY: THE BASIS FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND PLANNING IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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We declare our fifth goal to be to achieve development primarily through the use of Papua New Guinean forms of social, political and economic organization.¹

This paper will consider how applied anthropology has been used as the basis for social policy and planning in the period immediately before and after Independence. It will draw on the contributions of
maev O'collins

anthropologists and other social scientists to data collection and analysis in the fields of family and youth welfare and law reform. Many of these researchers have assisted directly in the task of developing alternative models which take into account both old and new ways of responding to changing times and social and economic circumstances.

western ways or papua new guinean ways?

During the early 1970s there was a great deal of debate on how traditional 'Papua New Guinean ways' could form a basis for appropriate development planning. A key question was whether it would be possible to achieve national unity within a constitutional framework which also took into account the cultural and social diversity of the hundreds of small scale societies which were to form a single nation state. This question was of particular importance to those considering how laws and regulations introduced during the colonial period could (or should) be revised to make them more relevant and effective in linking old and new approaches to law and social control.

Many social and economic programmes which had been introduced during colonial times also came under scrutiny. A frequent criticism was that these represented inappropriate and faintly absurd 'foreign' models of development. The 1974 Report of the Constitutional Planning Committee reflected the belief (held by many Papua New Guineans and foreign observers alike) that the process of colonisation had weakened the ability of local communities to solve their own problems and had created a dependency upon the colonial administrative system. It was now the time to examine the relevance of introduced substitutes for earlier ways of solving problems. Would Papua New Guinean ways of achieving social control, of providing for family and child welfare and of natural resource management prove to be more appropriate than European ways?

Even when the problem of incorporating traditional values, customs and problem-solving approaches was recognised, it was often difficult to decide what should be included. Could a set of 'Papua New Guinean Ways' be codified in a way which would be acceptable at provincial or local levels? At a time of rapid social and political change, younger members of families and communities would face challenges which were often quite different from those faced by their elders. The Constitutional Planning Committee cautioned that there was a need to be selective in developing an appropriate set of policies and institutions through which these policies could be implemented. In their view (1974:2/13) the process of nation-building implied that:

We should use the good that there is in the debris and deposits of colonisation, to improve, uplift and enhance the solid foundations of our own social, political and economic systems. The undesirable aspects of Western ways and institutions should be left aside. We recognise that some of our own institutions impose constraints on our vision of freedom, liberation and fulfilment. These should be left buried if they cannot be reshaped for our betterment.

In the various debates which took place at this time, it was often implied that policy-makers and planners already had available the data base necessary to develop new national policies and appropriate structures for their implementation. But, it soon became evident that in many cases there was insufficient information regarding particular societies or particular ways of meeting social or economic needs. Even where there was a great deal of information, it was difficult for policy-makers and planners to digest. Ethnographic data, collected in the past by anthropologists and other social scientists, often seemed to emphasise the uniqueness of small fragmented societies. Accounts of the numerous small societies throughout Papua New Guinea provided a bewildering array of lifestyles and social responses to the needs of particular groups in a community. What the nation builders wanted was some sense of unity within this diversity. This, they hoped, would provide an alternative to the continuing imposition of foreign solutions for Melanesian problems.

Could the information recorded by those who had carried out fieldwork in many of the small scale societies throughout Papua New Guinea now be used as the basis for social policy and planning required by the independent nation state?

Given the very different circumstances, were there any common themes which could be identified as the basis for national policies for family and child welfare, for women, or for youth?

social science research and policy formulation

The final report of the Constitutional Planning Committee described the process of colonisation as having been 'like a huge tidal wave' which had buried much of the foundations of the past. Now that independence was at hand:

We must not be afraid to rediscover our art, our culture, and our political and social organizations. Wherever possible, we must make full use of our ways to achieve our national goals. We insist on this,
despite the popular belief that the only viable means of dealing with the challenges of lack of economic
development is through the efficiency of Western techniques and institutions (p.2/13).

From the late 1960s, this process of rediscovery had been of concern to staff and students at the University
of Papua New Guinea. However, by 1970 the pace quickened. Anthropologists and other social scientists
were asked with increasing frequency to assist in providing background information on a variety of cultural,
environmental and practical issues. Information and advice were also sought on such questions as the
appropriate traditional designs for the new Papua New Guinea currency, or for other political symbols of the
new nation.

As Foundation Professor of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Ralph Bulmer was in the
forefront of many of these activities. Yet he also shared the concern of other staff that pressures to conduct
research of immediate social relevance and practical application might make it difficult to balance between
‘basic’ and ‘socially relevant’ research. Even the case for basic research in the social sciences had to be made
(Bulmer and Robertson 1970:36)

... paradoxically, because of its practical social relevance, because it is for example the man who has
done intensive ethnographic or sociological research who often ends up better equipped to advise on
practical problems than the man who has started with the shorter-term goal of seeking solutions to a
limited list of questions of immediate practical importance.

It was also clear that, given the need for information on a wide range of social, economic and
environmental issues, research needs and priorities had to be assessed at a national level and in consultation
with foreign researchers and institutions. In 1975, the Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research Act
was passed to enable the transformation (in January 1976) of the Australian National University’s New
Guinea Research Unit into the Papua New Guinea Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research
(IASER). A seminar in March 1976 provided an opportunity for representatives of national and provincial
government departments, and universities and research institutes, to consider national research needs and
priorities. In his opening address R.J. May, the Director of IASER, noted (May 1976:4) that:

The Institute’s terms of reference, as set out in the Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research
Act, point it in the direction of ‘research into social, political and economic problems of Papua New
Guinea’ in order to enable practical solutions to practical problems to be formulated.

Nevertheless, May cautioned, as Bulmer had in 1971, that distinctions between ‘pure’ and ‘applied’
research were difficult to draw. He carried this point somewhat further as, in his view:

Research which has no relevance beyond its immediate context or which makes no contribution to human
understanding is unlikely to provide the basis for sound policy making and there is little social research
which has no application to policy, even though its applicability may not be at once obvious or
palatable.

In the years since IASER was established a great deal of practical research has been undertaken under its
auspices, in collaboration with researchers and research institutes both within and outside Papua New Guinea,
and with national and international agencies. Before turning to look at some examples of applied practical
research, it must also be said that debate on what should be researched and who should carry out research has
continued unabated.

At a seminar held at IASER in 1978 a number of Papua New Guinean graduates and university students
called for greater control over foreign researchers. At the same time, representatives of government
departments noted their reliance on outside researchers to carry out urgent data collection on topics of
immediate concern. Both views were presented with great sincerity and commitment and the debate was neatly
summed up by Andrew Strathem (1979:67-8), who had been Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at
UPNG from 1973 to 1977. He noted this:

One view is that such research largely benefits only the researcher and/or his or her institution or country.
This may be true in some instances, but it is not so generally and need not be so at all. I can speak only
for work in the social sciences, where a growing proportion of research concentrates nowadays on
contemporary problems and has an applied focus or at least definite implications for policy on applied
problems. The opposite view therefore is that research can be of considerable benefit, and the argument
here is that PNG simply does not at present have a sufficient cadre of its own research workers to handle
all the problems of interest and concern in its different provinces.
In the ten years since that seminar was held, a number of Papua New Guinean social scientists have graduated from the University of Papua New Guinea and undertaken post-graduate studies at overseas universities. But the requests for research to be conducted, and for those who have already conducted research to provide advice or additional information, have increased at a much faster rate. While there are still criticisms of ‘irrelevant’ research by outsiders, there are also more opportunities for Papua New Guineans to get involved in research projects, either as individuals or as part of a team.

The Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research, the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies and the University of Papua New Guinea have provided opportunities for national and foreign social scientists to work together. Many students and recent graduates have been able to undertake field research both in their own communities and in areas of Papua New Guinea with which they were previously unfamiliar. For many students community based field research brought with it a painful realisation that Western style education had alienated them from their own cultures and traditions. It was ironic but true that they had been taught to ignore or reject the very knowledge which ethnographers sought so eagerly.

Nevertheless, it would not be a practicable or desirable solution to attempt to impose the process of rediscovery in the same way that Western knowledge had been imposed. In a paper discussing ways in which the education system could incorporate a study of traditional knowledge as well as Western knowledge, Bulmer (1971:31-32) concluded that every school in the country could and should be involved in research into local knowledge and customs and that ‘parents and other members of the local community should be invited to collaborate’:

> Research – learning for oneself, and taking the initiative to find out what one wants to know – is so much more rewarding an activity than merely being taught. Perhaps that hoary old truth is the main message that the anthropologist, the professional learner, can convey to the professional teacher.

Until the 1970s, most of the information which was available regarding the social structure, knowledge base and values and beliefs of Papua New Guinean societies had been gathered by anthropologists or other social scientists as part of their own graduate field research. Some anthropologists (such as Ralph Bulmer, Andrew Strathem and Ann Chowning) later joined the University of Papua New Guinea and directly assisted in the training of future policy makers and planners. Others returned to work with IASER, IPNGS and the Law Reform Commission, or as special consultants to government departments. The process of working with Papua New Guinean policy-makers and planners added another dimension to the debate on development priorities in post-independence Papua New Guinea. As I commented in an earlier consideration of the role of anthropology in Papua New Guinea (1981:45):

> During the 1979 Waigani Seminar . . . it was clear that Papua New Guinean participants held sharply different views on priorities for urban development and the social and economic issues involved. This illustrated that a new relationship is being developed, not only between foreign and national researchers but also between Papua New Guineans . . . [and] . . . that there is more equality and reciprocity in intellectual exchanges.

Attending a seminar at UPNG in August 1988, I was reminded of these earlier debates on research priorities and the value of ‘pure’ or ‘applied research’. The speaker, Linus Digim’rina (a graduate student from the Trobriand Islands studying at the Australian National University) was preparing to conduct research on Fergusson Island in Milne Bay Province. Questions and comments were wide ranging but often there were echoes of earlier debates on how to make use of the findings to benefit the people, the province and Papua New Guinea as a whole.

Today, as in 1970, it is important that decision makers have access to up-to-date data if they are to gain an adequate understanding of social, cultural and environmental issues of importance to individuals, families and the society in which they live. But there is no finality in the process as social and economic changes have brought with them new pressures and tensions. Neither traditional nor introduced colonial solutions are now appropriate and new forms of accommodation are being sought to meet the needs of different sub-groups within communities throughout Papua New Guinea. Women, youth, the elderly, those in conflict with the law, and small isolated societies have often been excluded from participating in development. In a number of situations, those who previously carried out social or ethnographic research which identified the problems of these groups are now involved in the search for practical solutions.

**FAMILY AND SOCIAL WELFARE – WOMEN, YOUTH AND THE ELDERLY**

The national goals of ‘integral human development’ and ‘equality and participation’ include a number of sub-goals which have often seemed to be at odds with each other. On the one hand, development should take place ‘primarily through the use of Papua New Guinean forms of social and political organization’. Yet there
is also a call for ‘equal participation of women citizens in all political, economic, social and religious activities’ and for marriage to involve ‘equality of rights and duties of the partners’ so that ‘responsible parenthood is based on that equality’.

When one looks at the reality of the role of women, it is sometimes hard to see how this equality and participation can be achieved through the use of traditional forms of social and political organisation. Those who would build on tradition point to the evidence provided by anthropologists that women did and do play a very important and significant role in Papua New Guinean societies (for example, M. Strathem 1972 and Weiner 1980). Others (Sexton 1982 and Warry 1985) describe the way in which women’s movements have developed as a response to social and economic change and to their exclusion from male-dominated development opportunities. Yet, it may also be true that women’s public role actually diminished during the colonial period. Macintyre (1985:19) makes the point that in Tube tube society:

... institutionalized local politics in this matrilineally organized community, as it is manifest in ward committees and local council political structures, has removed women from their former seats of power and left them as ‘powers behind the throne’.

Any attempt to develop appropriate national or provincial policies which recognise the particular needs of women and their role in development, must take into account the very different situations and historical contexts described by contemporary writers. Planners also need to be aware that, in postcolonial Papua New Guinea, women are still very unequal partners in their societies and their contributions to local and national development may be ignored or denied by those in decision-making positions (see Yeates 1986, for a discussion of this issue). The economic, as well as social, costs of this denial are often not really considered and, as one South Pacific writer (Pulea 1985) points out:

Although there are areas in law that apply the doctrine of equality cultural attitudes and policies often prevent women from participating equally. Heavy national budgetary commitments in educating and training both men and women each year make the denial of opportunities and the non-utilization of women’s skills a heavy burden and loss when assessed against a nation’s financial commitments.

A related factor which makes it difficult for women to become involved in political and economic activities has been the marked increase in family size in many Papua New Guinean societies. In a discussion of ‘traditional forms of family limitation’ Bulmer (1971) documented the acceptance of family planning in the past. This might logically have become the starting point from which family planning and other extension services could respond to the changing needs of women and young children. Even in areas where traditional practices had broken down, or become less important, concern for the health of young children and their mothers might make modern family planning programmes equally acceptable. Yet, after Independence, when attempts were made to introduce a population and family planning policy, this was rejected by many policymakers. Their rationale was that family planning programmes were Western imports and did not reflect traditional values.

Closer examination of the reactions to these policy initiatives suggests that it was not just the traditional or introduced beliefs and values of politicians which prompted this rejection. Often, the real issue was the way in which the need for family planning programmes was presented, both to national politicians and to community leaders.

Some problems in the acceptance of family planning reflected a lack of cultural awareness by those who were in charge of designing appropriate programmes for different areas of the country. Training of health extension workers did not always emphasise the social and cultural aspects of community health services. In addition, if these services were to reach those who needed them, the rapid ‘patrolling’ approach of mobile health services would have to be reviewed. As one study of rural family planning services (O’Collins 1978:7) concluded, it was essential for effective family planning that there would be:

... sufficient time for all the different natural groupings to meet with health or community workers. Extension workers may need to spend a much longer time in a village to allow for a larger meeting where a film or talk on nutrition, family planning, or village technology is followed by hours of discussion in smaller groups.

Other questions needed to be asked if primary health programmes were to be accepted and made use of by rural communities. What effect had economic and social change had on attitudes to ideal family size? How far had traditional beliefs and practices been influenced by introduced religious values? How did traditional healers view the health services introduced by government or church workers? To find answers to these questions earlier research had to be reviewed and further research had to be undertaken. The study by Townsend (1985)
on the situation of children throughout Papua New Guinea is an example of how earlier fieldwork and ongoing research have been combined. Trainers of health extension workers now have available a number of such reports and further research is being undertaken.

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY: NEW SOLUTIONS TO OLD PROBLEMS

Another significant and urgent issue which has emerged over the past ten years has been that of the relationship between youth and society. Increasing numbers of employed young people have migrated from their villages in search of work, excitement, or just the experience of living outside their own communities. In urban areas, the presence of out-of-work, out-of-school youth, who are seen as the major causes of crime and violence, has created a sense of ‘moral panic’ (see O’Collins 1986 for a discussion of urban youth as ‘folk devils’). Provincial and national governments have been under considerable pressure to endorse and implement youth policies and provide practical support which will enable young people to gain employment or participate meaningfully in development activities.

But, as with the call for national policies for women, less attention has been paid to the cultural and historical context and to the changing economic pressures which could explain why youth are now labelled as a ‘problem’ in society. In their analyses of youth and community, Allen (1986) and Monsell-Davis (1986) both concluded that separate youth programmes are not the answer and may even prove to be divisive. In their view, rural development and community based programmes were needed which could assist in meeting the changing needs of all members of a society. Yet, time and again one hears reports of calls by public servants for youth programmes to be designed exclusively for youth and exhortations to their parents and elders not to take part in ‘youth’ activities.

There are very real problems in trying to involve young people in economic activities in communities where decision-making remains almost exclusively the domain of a male-dominated gerontocracy. However, it has not proved an effective strategy to develop separate youth programmes which are perceived by the community elders as isolating youth from the rest of the community. Even when these programmes have been introduced by Papua New Guinean youth workers, they may, as one Southern Highlands community leader commented (O’Collins 1985:75) really reflect tingting bilong waitman (white man’s thinking, meaning Western ideas and ways of doing things).

Social scientists, like Monsell-Davis and Allen, have recorded the changing yet similar roles played by young people throughout Papua New Guinea. The knowledge and insights which they provide have not always been taken into account, particularly when national and international youth programmes have been introduced as ‘model’ programmes suitable for the whole country. There is often a rather uneasy fit between officially sponsored youth activities and community life-styles and ways of solving inter-generational conflicts. As pressures have mounted to find solutions, many policy-makers have looked to new ways to solve these old problems.

LAW REFORM AS A WAY OF REFORMING SOCIETY?

In the consideration of appropriate revisions to existing laws or the introduction of new statutes, the knowledge and experience of anthropologists and other social scientists provided a starting point for the ‘fundamental reorientation of attitudes and institutions of government’ called for in the Fifth Goal of the Constitution. A wide range of issues related to crime and punishment, law and order, and social justice and equality required consideration if law reform were to become a means of reshaping Papua New Guinea society.

What role, for example, should imprisonment play in correction (M. Strathern 1976)? Would probation or parole be appropriate alternatives (MacPherson and O’Collins 1980)? Should there be a new law for homicide compensation (A. Strathern 1981)? Indeed, what was the overall place of customary law in Papua New Guinea (Scaglion (ed.) 1983)?

When dealing with issues such as whether the law should be used as a means of protecting victims of domestic violence, it is difficult to move from a description of ‘what is’ to ‘what ought to be’. Social scientists working in the field of legal and social reform have found that the insights which they gained as researchers must now be communicated to decision-makers who come from the societies about which data has been collected.

In 1985, a series of case studies of domestic violence in Papua New Guinea (edited by S. Toft) pointed to the prevalence of wife-beating and other forms of domestic violence in many societies throughout the country. Other studies conducted under the auspices of the Law Reform Commission documented the economic and social costs of domestic violence in both urban and rural communities. However, despite mounting evidence that domestic violence is a serious problem in Papua New Guinea, it has not been easy to obtain acceptance from political decision-makers and community leaders that all is not right in their own societies.
For a ‘fundamental reorientation of attitudes’ to take place which would make it possible, and more palatable, for decision-makers to accept the need for change, community education may, in the long run, be more effective. In the meantime social scientists continue to draw attention to the need for sound social policies to assist vulnerable groups and others who have become the victims of social change. The elderly are increasingly neglected and Morauta (1984) and Zimmer (1987) have commented on the problems faced by older family members in communities where there is a high proportion of out-migration of younger community members.

Sometimes whole communities have become ‘victims of progress’. In a very real sense, they have never heard the rhetoric, let alone experienced the reality, of economic and social development. At the 1971 Waigani Seminar, Ralph Bulmer (1972) drew attention to the ‘plight’ of ethnic minorities who are often unable to gain the attention of planners. In so doing he also pointed to the obligation that anthropologists and other social scientists have to be more than professional learners, or even professional teachers. They are also called on to become, if not social planners, at least social critics. An important role is to alert planners to changes which are taking place in society and to the lack of ‘fit’ between proposed programmes and the real world of the villages, hamlets, and urban settlements where most Papua New Guineans live.

As Streton (1988) has pointed out, the role of universities and social scientists within these universities has to be broad enough to encompass a consideration of more appropriate solutions to the pressing issues confronting developing countries. There are no quick or simple ways to involve youth or women, the handicapped or the elderly in national development programmes. There is no specific ‘solution’ to problems of law and order, domestic violence or urban migration. It is important that social scientists point to the variety of situations and life circumstances for which solutions must be sought. Finally, and this is perhaps the most important contribution which social scientists continue to make to development planning, they are often the only link which exists between national policy-makers and planners and many remote rural communities on the edge of development.

NOTE


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CITIZENSHIP IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA

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While the small scale of New Guinea’s traditional societies and the diversity of her languages have been, and still are, obstacles to rapid social and economic development, the very same diversity of her traditional cultures, and their richness, and the diversity of human talents and experience that these provide, are also among her greatest assets (Bulmer 1969:1).

INTRODUCTION

In several publications Ralph Bulmer addressed the issue of regionally unequal development in Papua New Guinea and its effects on national unity (1969; 1971). In this paper I would like to deal with this general issue. The paper is prompted by research I carried out among the Kovai, in the Siassi district, a relatively backward region in Morobe Province, during 1978-79. Its specific subject is how Kovai experienced their relationship with the provincial and national governments of the independent state Papua New Guinea. I analyse this relationship referring to Gellner’s ideas on the nature of nationalism.

After the Introduction I first summarise Gellner’s views as set forth in his book Nations and Nationalism (1983), while in the second part of the paper I apply Gellner’s argument to the Kovai. In restricting part of my analysis to them only, I think I am over-cautious. I selected the Kovai to do my research since the scope they have to undertake monetary activities in their home area is limited. It is especially transport which is the bottleneck for economic development. As for education they are privileged. In my view the Kovai were in an intermediate position with regard to incorporation into the colonial and post-colonial economy, and this was an important reason I chose to work among them. If my work was to have any practical effects among the people studied, I thought that this would be more likely to occur in an intermediate area, as a result of hints based on